Sectt. II-29—27,604—25-11-26.

Development (192 6) Department.

Misc. SERIES.

G.O. No. 1214

DATED 20th Aug. '26

[Despatch Abstract.]

Legislative Council Question — Coconut Pest in South Kanara Dt. —
Papers Recorded

Council Office,
31-5-26.

Starred Question.

Mr. K. Raghuchandra Ballal

THE DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT.

2235

~~a soon~~ Will the hon. the Minister for Development be pleased to state:-

(a) whether their attention has been drawn to a para entitled "Cocoanut Pest" of the Mangalore correspondent of the "Daily Express" of Madras in its issue of 13th May 1926;

(b) ~~if so,~~ whether it is a fact that the said pest called Nephantis Serinopa is spreading in South Kanara in the topes to the south of the Netravati Railway Bridge;

(b) whether it is a fact that the last visitation of the said pest had been dealt with by the Entomological Department and if so, what was the result;

(c) whether it is a fact that the pest had not been stamped out; and

(d) whether the Government ~~have any objection to see that~~ propose to take early steps ~~are taken~~ to check the spread of the pest?

T.N.G.

With reference to the article entitled "Coconut Pest" by the Mangalore correspondent of the Daily Express in its issue of 14th May, 1926, will the hon. the Minister for Development be pleased to state:-

2 Madras Express Mangalore

Daily Express, Friday, 14th May '26

2

MANGALORE.

Municipal.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

10th May.—The Municipal Council has abolished the post of Secretary and has resolved to appoint a Revenue Officer instead.

Coconut Pest.

The pest, N. phantis Serinops, has appeared again or, to be exact, is spreading again. The trees along the river seem to have been first assailed and present a devastated appearance. The pest's last visitation had been controlled by the Entomological Department with the aid of parasites, indigenous and imported, as well as by artificial means, but the disease had not been stamped out. It had been lurking here and there, but the causes of the present recrudescence have yet to be discovered. The tops to the South of the Nitravati Railway bridge particularly present a pitiful sight once again.

3

Development Department.

(C.No.1892-III)

L.C.Question No. 2235 (starred).

Question.

With reference to the article entitled "Coconut Pest" by the Mangalore Correspondent of the Daily Express in its issue of 14th May 1926, will the Hon'ble the Minister for Development be pleased to state:--

(a) whether it is a fact that the said pest called Nephantis Serinopa is spreading in South Kanara in the topes to the south of the Netravati Railway Bridge;

(b) whether it is a fact that the last visitation of the said pest had been dealt with by the Entomological Department and if so, what the result was;

(b) whether it is a fact that the pest had not been stamped out; and

(d) whether the Government propose to take early steps to check the spread of the pest?

Draft answer.

(a) The pest which originally appeared in and around Mangalore has now spread to various centres in the District.

(b), (c) & (d). When the pest appeared for the first time in 1920, the Agricultural Department took measures to control it by means of cutting and burning the affected leaves. This method of control was, however, only of a temporary nature and it was found that if the control was to be effective it should be by the introduction of natural parasites which would kill the caterpillars. Work was begun on the parasitic control in 1923 by establishing cages where the parasites could be hatched. Parasites in large numbers

were thus bred and released. This method kept the caterpillars ~~in balance~~ under control and an natural balance between caterpillars and the parasites was established.

H re. para 4, p 4 NF

The pest cannot however be stamped out; all that can be done is to keep it under control by the parasites. The pest is however spreading through infected coconut leaves which are carried from one place to another and at each new outbreak

para 8, p. 5 NF

burning cutting and ~~destruction~~ of leaves are adopted for immediate control followed by breeding and introduction of parasites.

para 5, p. 5 NF and para 8 re

As the pest is spread easily by careless use of infected leaves for covering tiles, etc., considerable difficulty is experienced in controlling it rapidly and effectively. The Agricultural Department is however doing its best with its limited staff and resources to cope with the pest as it appears.

DESPATCHED
13 JUL 1926

RK
6.7.

6.7.26

approved by Mr S

Mr Wilson
The Chief Inspector
Mr Chelliah
The Inspector
Mr Jayewardene
The Inspector
Mr Mendis
M.7.26

done

5

2235
17-7-26

Starred Question No. ~~2209~~.
Mr.K. Raghuchandra Ballal.

With reference to the article entitled "Coconut Pest" by the Mangalore Correspondent of the Daily Express in its issue of 14th May 1926, will the Hon'ble the Minister for Development be pleased to state:--

(a) whether it is a fact that the said pest called Nephantis Serinopa is spreading in South Kanara in the topes to the south of the Netravati Railway Bridge:

(b) Whether it is a fact that the last visitation of the said pest had been dealt with by the Entomological Department and if so, what the result was;

(c) whether it is a fact that the pest had not been stamped out

And (d) whether the Government propose to take early steps to check the spread of the pest?

Development Department.

A N S W E R.

(a) The pest which originally appeared in and around Mangalore has now spread to various centres in the District.

(b), (c) & (d). When the pest appeared for the first time in 1920, the Agricultural Department took measures to control it by means of cutting and burning the affected leaves. This method of control was, however, only a temporary nature and it was found that if the control was to be effective it should be by the introduction of natural parasites which would kill the caterpillars. Work was begun on the parasitic control in 1923 by establishing cages where the parasites could be hatched. Parasites in large numbers were thus bred and released. This method kept the caterpillars under control and a natural balance between caterpillars and the parasites was established.

The pest cannot however be stamped out; all that can be done is to keep it under control by the parasites. The pest is

however

however spreading through infected cocoanut leaves which are carried from one place to another and at each new outbreak cutting and burning of leaves are adopted for immediate control followed by breeding and introduction of parasites.

As the pest is spread easily by careless use of infected leaves for covering tiles, etc., considerable difficulty is experienced in controlling it rapidly and effectively. The Agricultural Department is however doing its best with its limited staff and resources to cope with the pest as it appears.

V. Pandrang Row,
Secretary to Government.

Fort St. George,
dated 13th July 1926.

To The Legislative Council Office.

(The above answer has been approved by The Hon'ble Diwan Bahadur Sir T.N.Sivagnanam Pillai, Kt.)

F O R W A R D E D.

(By Order)

DESPATCHED
13 JUL 1926

R.K

Superintendent.

7

Law Dept. IH-8—2,500-23- 2-26

QUESTION.—No. 2629 for the next meeting of the Legislative Council ~~to be held on~~ the ~~192~~

1892 III
18.6.26

SUBMITTED that two copies of this Question may be forwarded to the Development Department.

The Question has been admitted.

A.S.S.
15/6

15/6

SECRETARY LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL No. , dated
19 JUL 1926
WESTERN AUSTRALIA DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

The Dev Department.

Dev. Dept.

To U.S. Please see the ~~Re~~ L. C. question in CF ~~a~~ ~~draft~~ No information is available in this office. A draft D.O. to Mr. Aunstead is submitted.

III for approval.
18.6.26

PAR
18.6.26

WA
22.6.26

8.

Dev. Deptt.

D. O. No. 1892 III/26 dt. 22.6.26

d/d

f.c. letter, dispatch no.

My dear Ambedkar,

I am to enclose a copy of L.C. question No. 2629 which Mr. Raghu Chandra Ballal proposes to ask at the next meeting of the Council and to request you to furnish a report ~~on the subject with reference to~~ information to enable the ~~points raised in~~ question to be answered. ~~clauses a), b) and c) of the question~~

Yours sincerely
[illegible]
20/6/26.

R. D. Ambedkar Esq. M.A.
D. A. with Copies of question & newspaper cutting ~~etc~~ for C.I.

18.6.26

RAR
18/6/26

DESPATCHED
25 JUN 1926

D.1990 m/ 1-7-26

D.O.

DIRECTOR OF AGRICULTURE,
MADRAS, Camp: OOTACAMUND.
Dated the 29th June 1926.

Dear Mr. Row,

With reference to your office D.O.No. 1892 III/26-1 dated the 22nd June 1926, enclosing a copy of Legislative Council question No.2629 and a copy of a newspaper cutting from the Daily Express of 14th May 1926, the following information will enable the question to be answered.

2. A caterpillar pest of coconuts known as Nephantis serinopa is very well known in Ceylon and on the east coast of this Presidency. In these places, it is sporadic and never does very much harm. It is kept in check by its natural parasites of which there are several and a natural balance has been established. In some years the caterpillar increases and the pest becomes bad, but this is followed by an increase of the parasites which soon reduce the attack to normal again.

3. In 1920, the pest suddenly appeared on the coconuts round the railway station at Mangalore and from these it spread rapidly to the trees in and round the ~~trees~~ town. When the attention of the Agricultural Department was called to this, it had already spread over a wide area and was causing a great deal of damage and alarm. It had, undoubtedly, been introduced on infected fronds from the east and unfortunately it was introduced without its natural parasites which do not exist in South Kanara. The consequence was that the caterpillar spread unchecked. The Agricultural

Department

Department took prompt measures to control it by means of cutting and burning affected leaves. It is impossible to spray the trees as the caterpillar is protected from contact with any spray material by living in galleries on the leaves constructed of grass and excreta. In 1922, the aid of the Pest Act was called in by local request to enforce the controlling measures and the pest was by such means held in check fairly successfully.

4. The Agricultural Department, however, quite -- realised from the first that this method of control was only of a temporary nature and could never reach finality and that any control to be effective must be through the natural parasites. The very nature of the control measures prevented the parasitic control from being adopted since in burning the leaves with their caterpillars the parasites are also destroyed. As soon, therefore, as the pest had been got in hand, work was begun on the parasitic control. Cages were established in many places where the leaves could be enclosed in such a way that the parasites hatching out could escape while the Nephantis moths could not do so. Meanwhile, parasitised material was brought from the east coast and parasites in large numbers were bred and released. This, in the course of a year or so, had the desired effect and a natural balance between parasites and caterpillar was established. In Mangalore town and neighbourhood now little sign of the caterpillar can be seen though it is present. It must be realised that the pest cannot be stamped out. It will always be present, but it will cause a minimum of damage as it does on the east coast, being worse some years than others. 11 M

5. The work in the neighbourhood of Mangalore was successful, but unfortunately the pest has spread and is still spreading from that infected centre. The main cause

of

of this spread is the traffic in coconut leaves along the rivers and backwaters and along the roads and railways. Consignments of tiles by road, rail and water are covered with coconut leaves, fish sellers cover their baskets with leaves and so on. Such people take no -- precautions to see that the leaves they use are free from caterpillars and though warnings have been issued it can hardly be expected that much attention will be paid to them. The consequence is that infected material is constantly being carried ~~on~~ about and that the pest breaks out in new places. A study of these new centres of infection will show that they were all on main lines of communication at first and of course each new centre of infestation acts as a new distributing centre.

6. At each new outbreak the old problem is revived, a lot of caterpillars with few parasites. The process of cutting and burning has to be adopted for immediate control, followed by the establishment of cages and finally by the introduction of parasites which have been bred in the laboratory and which are taken to the place and released.

7. Naturally it takes time, one or two years, to establish the balance between parasite and pest which will control it, in each new locality.

8. The Agricultural Department are doing their best with their limited staff and resources to cope with the pest as it appears, but so long as it can be spread so ~~easily~~ easily by the careless use of infected leaves for -- covering tiles etc. it will be very difficult indeed to handle it rapidly and efficiently.

9. If it is desired to tackle the problem promptly

all

all over South Kanara and Malabar it will be necessary to appoint a special staff of entomological assistants, who can be rushed off to each new out-break, and at the same time, to establish a laboratory where parasites can be reared on a very large scale ready for release in such newly infected areas. At present, the Agricultural Department has neither staff nor money to deal with the pest in this way and can only do their best to deal with each new out-break as best they can. There is no doubt that the pest has spread duri the last year or so to a large number of new centres and as pointed out above the more of these centres there are the more chance is there of it spreading to still others.

10. What is needed to deal with a pest of this sort really effectually is to establish a sort of central station on the analogy of a fire station with men and equipment ready to dash off at a moment's notice. The fire station in this case is represented by a laboratory, the fire men are entomological assistants, the fire engine insect cages and masses of parasites. The Agricultural Department has shown that the method of control is the correct one, bu as I say they have not got the equipment necessary to establish such "fire stations."

Yours sincerely,

Rudolph D. Anstead.

M.R.Ry, V.Pandrang Row Avl., I.C.S.,
Secretary to Government,
Development Department,
Stone House Hill,
Ootacamund.

13

Des. Dept.

To Ms.

Please see Leg. Council Qu in the C.F. and the D. A's D. O. reply at pp. 3-6 ante.

A draft answer on the lines indicated in the D. O. is submitted for approval.

The answer is somewhat lengthy but it seems preferable to explain the measures adopted and the results obtained.

Ms
2. VII. 26

DAR
2.7.26.

S/ RR
6.7.

Rec'd D. 32
9.7.26 pp. 1 & 7

Charlotte
6/7/26

Thanks with the note which seems on the right lines

answered Ms
13/7

Done. These papers are required in connection with a Part II Scheme for 1927-28.

Ms
13/7

PPA
12/7/26

M3 RR 11.7.26

PPA
6.7.26

To A.S.

Please see the L.C. questions and answers at pp. 5-6 CF. No supplementary questions were asked. The papers may be recorded

RR
20/07/26.

Ms
19. VIII. 26

DAR
19.8.26.

Scott: U-6 (5)—25,000—25-11-25. (6)

M Dev. DEPARTMENT.

	Date.	Initials.
When received for Fair-copying.		
When copied ..		
When examined ..		
When signed ..		
When despatched ..		

Legislative Council question — Cocoanut Pest in South Kanara District - Papers recorded

READ AGAIN G.O. No. ....., dated 192

" " " " ..... " 192

READ ALSO:—

C. No. ..... From the ....., No. ....., dated ..... 192 .

" " ..... " " ..... " ..... " ..... 192 .

" " ..... " " ..... " ..... " ..... 192 .

ORDER.

No. 1214, dated 20-8-1926.

Recorded

9-8-26

sd/ R.R.

20-8-26.

(initialled in notes)